

TITLE

DOOR MAT COMMUNICATION DEVICE AND METHOD

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

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1. FIELD OF USE

The present invention has many applications for providing communication to persons approaching and traversing through an entranceway, particularly an entranceway separating an outer and inner area. The entranceway can be a doorway of a residence or commercial facility, including a doorway within the interior of a larger enclosed facility.

2. PRIOR ART

All homes or residences utilize the door separating the public exterior area from the private interior. Many individuals use various articles to decorate, identify or distinguish their residence. Examples of such devices include floral decorations placed on the door and doormats placed in front of the door.

Commercial establishments also use their entryways as locations to provide identification and advertising. Typically, the door surface or wall surface proximate to the door is used to identify the commercial entity.

These efforts and devices are typically separate and uncoordinated from the interior decorative theme or signage. There is no color, graphic, decorative, informational or directional continuity between the exterior area and the interior area.

Doormats are often placed on the floor surface proximate to the exterior or outside the entrance or entry door. Doormats have been used to provide protection of floor coverings from dirt and debris otherwise tracked into an interior space. Doormats also are used to provide protection from slipping on wet floor surfaces. Doormats are also placed in the interior area proximate to the entrance.

Doormats have also been used to convey messages or selected themes. Doormats have been used to provide welcome messages or identify the occupants of the residence or business space accessed by the door or passageway. Doormats

can be used as part of the outside décor or decoration of the business or residence, displaying themes or colors.

Various methods and devices have also been utilized to communicate information to persons approaching a doorway or passageway. Signs are typically placed on the exterior door surface or proximate to the door or passageway. Important emergency exit information is also conveyed on the door surface or typically above the doorway. Additional location or direction information is often communicated after passing through the doorway by similar wall mounted signs.

Changes in the configuration of business organizations and space utilization require change in the signs. This can be a difficult or time consuming task.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a method and means to enhance the design or decorative function of doormats by providing a coordinated motif or theme. It is a further object of the invention to provide a method and means for enhanced location and directional information. Other objectives and advantages of the invention will be apparent to persons skilled in the technology after review of the information contained in this disclosure. Such objectives and advantages are claimed within the scope of this invention.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

The method and apparatus taught by the invention subject of this specification utilizes the ability to provide a door mat system or arrangement utilizing multiple mat components or a combination of separate mats or similar coverings having a common or interrelated message or theme proximate to the both sides (i.e., exterior and interior) of a door or entry way. The invention utilizes a continuity of a selected message or theme. The message can be a combined identity and welcoming message. The theme can be a design or color that transcends across the portal or entryway, facilitating the identity or purpose of the location to a visitor.

SUMMARY OF DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of the specification, illustrate preferred embodiments of the invention. These drawings, together with the general description of the invention given above and the detailed description of the preferred embodiments given below, serve to explain the principles of the invention.

Figure 1 illustrates the placement of floor mats subject of the invention in relation to an entry or doorway.

Figure 2 is a schematic illustration of one embodiment of the invention.

Figure 3 is a schematic illustration of another embodiment of the invention.

Figures 4 through 9 are schematic illustrations of other embodiments of the invention.

The above general description and the following detailed description are merely illustrative of the subject invention, and additional modes, advantages and particulars of this invention will be readily suggested to those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF INVENTION

Often great care and considerable expense is used in creating a desired decorative theme or motif in the entrance areas of residences and commercial entities. Wall and floor coverings, material and colors, as well as furniture and accessories are selected to compliment or maintain continuity with such theme or motif. In addition, commercial entities seek to create separate and readily recognizable identities. These efforts may utilize trademarked symbols, color patterns, names or combinations of the each element.

In many commercial office spaces or business locations, exterior signage is restricted or of limited availability. This is of particular concern at the entrance doorway of an individual business located within a multi business complex.

In large public facilities, such as hospitals, government buildings and airports, providing directional information to is a continual problem. Signs located on doors,

walls or overhead are commonly used. However, directional or location information can also be communicated by floor markings.

All of these goals and objectives can be combined with devices for controlling dirt and debris and for protecting floor surfaces. The present invention is not limited to locations separated by a door. The invention can be located proximate to both of the entrance or passageway. It may also be located within the entrance or passageway.

The present invention utilizes floor covering materials, such as floor mats or removable floor coverings such as small rugs or carpets, or similar devices suitable for interior or outside use ("mats") to provide an enhanced continuity with one or more the decorative themes that may exist on one or both sides of an entrance or passage way. The mats can provide personalized information. The mats can incorporate multiple materials and colors. The mats subject of the invention may also contain directional or identification information that may be particularly advantageous for commercial use.

The invention utilizes a mat having two components, i.e., a component that is visible primarily on one side of the door or passageway, and a second component visible after passing through the door or passageway. The components may be attached or be separate.

Figure 1 illustrates the placement of two mats **300 350** located on opposite sides of a doorway or entranceway **200** communicating between to areas separated by a wall **100**. One mat **300** is placed on the floor **401** of the first side (or "exterior side") of the entranceway **200** and the second mat **350** is placed on the floor **402** of the second side (or "interior side"). These designations will be used in describing the invention within this specification and drawings.

Figure 2 illustrates an overhead view of two mats **300 350** subject of the invention placed in a relationship contemplated by one embodiment of the invention within an entranceway (not shown) or separated by the entranceway. Also depicted are areas **501 601** within each mat where text or other messaging can be placed. In keeping with the designations established for Figure 1, the bottom mat **300** depicted in Figure 2 is the exterior mat and may contain a message such as "welcome." The

upper mat **350** may contain the message "how are you?". In another variation the text may be "welcome" and "come again". In yet another variation, the text contained in the interior mat **350** may state "exit" and the text of the exterior mat **300** may state "entrance" or "no exit". It will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that the placement of exit messages or identification on a floor covering will provide advantage for identification of such exits in emergencies, particularly in smoke filled conditions requiring the occupants to crawl along the floor surface.

Figure 3 illustrates an overhead view of two mats **300 350** each containing direction information **502 602**. Figure 4 depicts another overhead view similar to that depicted in Figure 3 and wherein the directional arrows **502 503** on the exterior mat **300** are color coded with corresponding directional arrows **602 603** contained on the interior mat **350**. It is envisioned that this may be beneficial for use as part of a hospital or clinic directional system. Figure 4 also illustrates the location of a separating wall or barrier **100** and entranceway **200**. The interior floor **402** and exterior floor **401** are also depicted.

Figure 5 illustrates a system of separately shaped but coordinated and visually communicating mats **300 350** in relation to a wall **100** and entranceway **200**. The mats together effectively communicate to the observer that the travel through the entranceway is intended. The interior floor **402** and exterior floor area **401** are also depicted. Figure 6 depicts a similar mat system but wherein the mats **300 350** are of a more regular or conventional shape, but the message is conveyed by the designs **305 355** on the mats.

Figure 7 illustrates an overhead view of a decorative coordinated mat system comprised of two mats **300 350** again having separate designs but that are coordinated into a composite composition having an intended motif or theme. The theme can be coordinated with either the interior area **402** or exterior area **401** or both. The relationship of each mat to the entranceway **200** connecting the interior and exterior floor areas is also illustrated.

Figure 8 illustrates another variation of the coordinated mat system comprised of two mats **300 350** proximate to an entranceway **200**. It will be appreciated that

the colors or materials within the mat can be coordinated as part of the design and function.

Figure 9 is an illustration of the invention utilized to provide directional information applicable to a multiple of passages **200**, **200A**, **200B**, **200C**, **200D** within spaces **100**, including but not limited to walls or moveable partitions. For purpose of describing the invention as illustrated in Figure 9, directional orientation is illustrated as north **N** south **S** east **E** and west **W**. The invention comprises a plurality of components, being separate mats **300**, **350**, **300A**, **350A**, **300B**, **350B**, **300C**, **350C** and **350D** placed proximate to passages. Each mat displays directional information. In the illustrated embodiment, the information is conveyed by multiple colored or patterned arrows **501**, **502**, **503**, **504**. The arrows or the colors/patterns may be correlated to different departments, rooms, terminal buildings, or similar physical destinations. The directional information may be supplemented by or substituted with text or other symbols. Referring specifically to the Figure 9, the first mat **300** directs the user to proceed north through passage **200** for all destinations identified by the 4 arrows **501**, **502**, **503**, **504**. At the opposite side of the passage, the second mat **350** directs the user to continue north. If the distance to be traversed is long, it may be useful to have additional mats **352** placed on the floor duplicating the information (not shown) of the second mat **350**. A third mat **300A** directs the user to proceed east for the destinations identified by 3 arrows **501**, **503**, **504**. If the destination identified by the forth arrow or symbol, **502**, the user is directed to proceed north through passage **200A**. The user passing through the passage encounters another mat **350A** continuing the directional symbol **502** directing him/her to continue north.

Users seeking destinations identified by the 3 symbols **501**, **503**, **504** are directed to proceed east an unspecified distance **105** until another mat **300B** is encountered. This mat directs the user seeking the destination identified by on symbol **501** to turn north and proceed through the passage **200B**. After passing through this passage, the user is directed by a mat **350B** to proceed west. This directional information is conveyed by the direction of the symbol or arrow **501** contained within the mat **350B**. However, the mat **300B** located proximate to the

passage **200B** directs users seeking the destinations identified by the other two symbols **503 504** to continue east. A further mat **300C** directs users seeking one destination **504** to proceed north through passage **200C** and users seeking the other destination **503** to continue east through passage **200D**. Additional directional
5 information is contained in the component, i.e., mat, **350C 350D** of the invention placed proximate to the other side of the respective passageway **200C 200D**.

It will be appreciated that the mats can be removed for cleaning, facilitate the maintenance of clean and dry floor surfaces in other parts of the building as well as provide means to readily change directional or location identification.

10 This specification is to be construed as illustrative only and is for the purpose of teaching those skilled in the art the manner of carrying out the invention. It is to be understood that the forms of the invention herein shown and describe are to be taken as the presently preferred embodiments. As already stated, various changes may be made in the shape, size and arrangement of components or adjustments
15 made in the steps of the method without departing from the scope of this invention. For example, equivalent elements may be substituted for those illustrated and described herein and certain features of the invention may be utilized independently of the use of other features, all as would be apparent to one skilled in the art after having the benefit of this description of the invention.

20 Further modifications and alternative embodiments of this invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art in view of this specification.